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OTTAVIO.

Nay, now, I know full well, you artists live in fancy more than in the actual world, Loving air-phantoms more, and lovely dreams, Than things that truly live and breathe around you.

Now 'tis not so with me, the very least; And all must follow as their bent inclines. No artist I, nor poet; I am content With plain reality. This being so, We two can live together charmingly. The one need never cross the other's path. You love the fair ideal, I the fact.

ANTONIO.

Your pardon, sir, I understand you not; What do you mean by this?

OTTAVIO.

My dear Antonio, I will deal honestly and frankly by you. You are a plain, blunt man, and understand not What we of courtly breeding call finesse. Look you, my good Antonio, you are poor; I grieve to see you pining day by day. You paint fine pictures, and remain unknown. What profits it how bright your candle burns, If hid beneath a bushel? 'Tis my wish To make you happy. My palazzo's large, Our richest nobles daily flock to it. You shall stay here, and paint, and live at ease.

ANTONIO.

My gracious lord, is this no idle dream? Does fate begin to smile on me at last? From my first boyhood, like a Will-o'-the-Wisp, It still has fitted near me but to mock me. When I essay'd to grasp it, it was gone! And there I stood in darkness as before.

OTTAVIO.

Your troubles shall be ended; by the Saints, There's not so culpable, as not to make A fellow-creature happy, when we can.

ANTONIO.

You think most generously.

OTTAVIO.

And so do you.

ANTONIO.

've felt your kindness deeply from the first.

OTTAVIO.

Then you would make me happy, if it lay Within your power to do so?

ANTONIO.

Certainly!

But you, my gracious lord, are fortune's child, And how can one so poor as I am make you happy?

OTTAVIO.

Ah, all's not gold that glitters, good Antonio,— I am not happy! no, in sooth I am not!

ANTONIO.

My heart is sad for you. Can this be so, My good, kind lord? And yet all, all is yours, That any child of clay could wish to have!

OTTAVIO.

Ay, all indeed, but not the chiefest bliss.

ANTONIO.

The chiefest bliss? That every man, methinks, May have, if he desire.

OTTAVIO.

What do you call

The chief, Antonio?

ANTONIO.

Confidence in God, And an untroubled conscience.

OTTAVIO.

Oh, yes! No doubt, no doubt! That is the chief,

Yes,—for eternity. But man lives here In time, and here must taste some bliss supreme, Else never say that he is truly happy.

ANTONIO.

That is most true.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

ART NEWS FROM ENGLAND.—LETTER 8.

To the Editors of the Crayon:

LONDON, October 22.

A DULLER month than this in art matters it has not fallen on me yet to chronicle.

The most interesting point is the appropriation of a court at the Crystal Palace to the display of all that the Arundel Society have published, which is neither little nor unimportant. Besides the prints from Fra Angelico and Giotto, there are casts from ancient ivories, reductions from some of the Elgin marbles, and, most memorable of all, the original tracings made by Mr. Oliver Williams from the frescoes of Giotto in the Arena Chapel at Padua, after which the engravings have been produced. The court thus filled is to be opened on the 8rd of next month. If actually as well managed as I infer them to be from the prints, the tracings are clearly invaluable. On the general public their presumable effect may be rated at zero. I see it announced that Tintoret's great Crucifixion, before which Ruskin, more eloquent in praise than in his most eloquent passages, is stricken silent, ranks among the Society's forthcoming engravings.

Another exhibition contemplated by the directors of the Crystal Palace is that of the unsold spoils of the British department in the Universal Exposition at Paris. Some public preliminary steps have already been taken with this object in view; but what may be the actual extent of the proposed display in proportion to the totality of the collection, what the chances of realizing it, and what the means of finding the required house-room in the Crystal Palace, are matters upon which I am not in a position to speak.

I hear a rumor of a further exhibition, to include pictures by Landseer, a reduced duplicate of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair in Paris," and a collection of photographs. Of the promoters' immediate objects, or other details, of this exhibition I know nothing. The first query which suggests itself to the censorious mind is whether it is undertaken in hostility or in friendliness to Landseer or Madlle. Bonheur—and if in hostility, hostility to which of the two? During the lady's stay in London, Sir Edwin is reported to have rendered her the honor due to her genius, nor doubtless was she behindhand in recognizing his. Others, however, were not slow at drawing invidious comparisons; and while Madlle. Bonheur's power and study were rightly exalted, the enthusiasm of some people was somewhat too prone to keep silence on the invention, versatility, and sympathetic breadth of Landseer. Ten to one, however, the exhibition in question, if really contemplated, is got up in perfect good faith, without any side-view to the exaltation of the one artist at the expense of the other; and indeed, if Madlle. Bonheur is to

be represented by the single reduction of her "Horse Fair," the project could scarcely be in *her* interest.

The publication of Schnorr's designs from the Bible has been commenced here in a serial form. The original German wood-blocks are used; and the work is certainly a paragon of cheapness—six large engravings, in the best style of wood-cutting, well printed and well got up, the production of an artist of distinguished European reputation, for one shilling. About thirty numbers, at this price each, will complete the series. The designs are in the large Raphaellesque style of the leading Germans, marked with thought, art, and judgment. Many will call them great, and all will admit their solid merit, even if they agree with me in thinking that Schnorr fails to strike the true key either in inventive genius or in religious sentiment. A second art publication pertaining to the month is a volume of "Examples of Ornament," selected chiefly from sources accessible to Englishmen, and taking a wide range of time and country. It is a creditable work—one of a class which testifies to the greatly increasing interest which Great Britain concedes to decorative art at the present day.

An announcement, however, which throws all such minor matters as these into shade, is that of the third volume of Ruskin's "Modern Painters," which has baited the hopes of artists, students, and public for some years past, and is now promised, with some appearance of certainty, at an early period. A couple of volumes by our noble poet, Robert Browning, are also on the eve of coming out. The author is one of the few men great in poetry or other intellectual pursuits, not immediately connected with fine art, who have a genuine judgment and appreciation of the latter. This has been sufficiently manifest in his previous works; and will anew be proved by poems in the new volumes, bearing one upon Giotto, another upon Fra Filippo Lippi, and a third upon works of art which the poet's subtle taste has collected in his own hands. I may add that vague hints have reached me of a possible illustrated edition of Mrs. Browning's poems. That of Tennyson, long in hand now, still lingers. No doubt it is positively to be, nevertheless.

Knowing the laureate's indisposition to any approach to publicity, it is with some surprise I see it stated that a bust of him is about to be executed by Mr. Brodie, a member of the Scottish Academy. Of this sculptor's powers I have no personal cognizance; but another sculptor's rendering of Tennyson—a medallion here, of admirable quality, by Thomas Woolner—is likely to appear, through the unrivalled medium of photography, as the frontispiece to the illustrated volume.

Something new is continually appearing, to show that photography is now being worked in earnest in fulfillment of that part of its mission, which consists in aiding art. Photographic copies are now about London of some of the great works of painting. The Virgin and Child from Raphael's "Madonna di San Sisto" is rendered on a sufficient scale of size; and the noble pre-Raphaelite frescoes, from the Campo Santo of Pisa, form a series of unsurpassable importance as far as they have yet gone.

One of our most genuine art-collections

the fruit of private or semi-private effort, and which has not yet obtained such a measure of public prominence as its value demands, seems likely soon to come forward more decidedly. I allude to the Architectural Museum in Westminster, whose original foundation arose from the gathering together of numerous models and details for the guidance of the workmen in our new Houses of Parliament, and whose local habitation has never been anything more commodious or dignified than a kind of loft or long wooden work-shed in a confined back street. The committee of this institution has lately accepted an offer from the government department of art to contribute £100 to its funds for the ensuing year, on condition that one hundred of the government students shall have free access to the collection and lectures for that term, and that some of the casts shall be at the disposal of the department's lecturers. The Architectural Museum, whose sphere of substantial usefulness will probably be thus materially increased, has more than one claim to respect, and among them, this—that Ruskin selected it about a year ago for the delivery of a course of lectures, or rather addresses, on the subject of mediæval illumination, and the conditions under which its revival might be practicable at the present day.

Yet once again does the name of Ruskin come under my pen, and in connexion with a matter of profound value to the cause of art. It is reported that a building is about to be erected from his design in the north of England, and under the care of a practical architect. I give the report as it reaches me; may it be true!

In default of more news, let me finish with an anecdote, as far as I know, new to print. In the Duke of Sutherland's princely mansion of Stafford House, known to fame and Mrs. Stowe, one of the crack pictures of the renowned gallery is a large Murillo of "Abraham receiving the Three Angels," in whom many biblical interpreters see the three persons of the Trinity. The picture is the "*delectia domini*," the admiration of connoisseurs, the contempt of men of independent sense. The angels are lumps of boorish density—as stupidly vulgar as any other sacred thing that Murillo has profaned, which is saying enough. This work came under the learned eye of the poet Rogers, who quitted it with the remark, "I now understand how 'some have entertained angels unwares.'"

WM. M. ROSSSETTI.

PARIS, October 31, 1855.

MESSEURS, EDITORS:—If the opinion which I have formed, and which I shall frankly express, of the English school of oil painting, as represented in the Exposition, differs from that of the English themselves, I must at least claim to have had entirely unbiased feelings in the case. From the great reputation of many of the exhibitors in England and America, I was prepared to expect much better works from them than I have seen. So that I found it difficult at first to believe that these were actually the originals of the distinguished artists whose names are appended to them.

Judged by any standard but their own (a very favorite standard, by the way, with the English) there are striking defects

in the oil paintings of the English school to-day, which make them stand in unfavorable contrast to the best works of their continental neighbors. Generally they are crude and gaudily cold in color, inharmonious and false in tone, thin, flat, and without texture in their style of handling, as if painted in aquarel. The English painters treat their canvases very much as they do their paper sketch-books, and deal with oils as they do with their water colors. But it is not so much for thinness as for flatness—not so much for lack of paint on their canvases, as for the absence of *impasto* where it is required—that we quarrel with them. The English have neither transparency in their thinness nor texture in their opaqueness. Their color is as feeble as their execution. In my humble opinion, they must reform it altogether, for they are altogether off the track. They colored better a hundred years ago. I fear Sir Joshua and Sir Thomas inoculated them with some very bad ideas. I know that there are some among them who are striving bravely to drag themselves out of this mud. But they are all more or less covered with it, and in a bad way. And what is worse, their critics uphold them in it, and strangely enough, claim for them a better idea of color than the French. I think, however, this Exposition, where they have an opportunity of comparing their own works with those of the French, the Belgians, the Hollanders, the Germans, the Swiss, and others, ought to take down some of their national self-sufficiency, and make them see that they are by no means as yet on the topmost stair of art. After enjoying and studying the best of the continental pictures, one gets but little satisfaction out of the best picture that Great Britain sends to this gallery. We grow weary of these thin, cold pinks in their flesh, and purples in their landscapes—these raw whites and chilling blues in their skies and water—these muddy tones and dirty glazings, and this irreproachable flatness of surface—so common in their most noted and costly pictures. If our English friends were more humble-minded, we could pardon more, but Great Britain must needs claim to be first in art, as in everything else. O that this eternal boasting of the Anglo-Saxon blood should ever obtrude itself into the sacred temple of Art, where, if ever at all, the votary and the critic should be an humble seeker and observer!

But the truth is, John B. was ever a slow coach, though it may be a sure one in the end. And I dare say he may one day catch up to his continental neighbors, and do something better than crack his whip, and brag of the splendid and solid equipment of his belated vehicle—which yet raises such a dust that he cannot see how far he is distanced by his competitors.

If what I have said of the English pictures be true, it follows that good engravings of many of them would be nearly as valuable as the originals—which I think is true. They may even suggest more than the originals, as in Landseer's "Sanctuary." In the paintings of many whom young American artists are accustomed to hear of as great names, little is given, which is not as well, if not better, rendered in the engraving. In fact, if I remember, Mr. Ruskin often appeals to the engravings of Turner, as illustrations of his power, and de-

fects qualities therein, which perhaps none but the initiated can succeed in finding.

In a large exhibition like this, one cannot help comparing, and referring every picture to a certain standard. In passing from the French and Belgian paintings to the English, what impresses one first of all in the latter, is their inferiority in color and in texture. I think any one who has studied the best works of the acknowledged masters, old and new, must feel this very decidedly. The English painters invite criticism on this ground, for they evidently aim at color, but strive without sufficient knowledge of the means to produce it. Texture they seem wholly to ignore. I think it is not so much the want of the perception in these respects, as of the mechanical skill requisite. It may seem strange to find fault with them in this respect, for in a certain way they are remarkable for this very thing. I mean to say, that it is a misdirected and inadequate mechanism. We like a guitar or a musical box, but we prefer a piano.

They surely cannot be excused as we Americans can, on the ground of ignorance of the best masters. For they have rich galleries in their own country, and opportunities of acquaintance with those on the continent. They are a people who travel, and visit the galleries of the Louvre, of Germany, of Holland, of Italy. Why is it that they collect such good pictures, and yet gain so little from them? Why is it, that with such Gainsboroughs and Hogarths of their own, to say nothing of such Titians and Claudes as they have in London, that some of this feeling for color does not manifest itself in their works of today? Is it that they *will not*, or that they *cannot* paint as well as their neighbors across the channel? I am inclined to think that both causes operate.

In the first place, I am induced to trace their deficiency to that stubborn conservatism, that immense national pride which characterizes the Englishman, and which, in spite of all his inestimable good qualities, will assert itself somehow or other. It is that unbending adherence to every idea, every usage and fashion that takes its rise on English soil, which extends through all the ramifications of society, of law, of custom, of religious faith and ritual, in England, down to the very dress of the Englishman, which distinguishes him from all other nations. No being is so insoluble in the great tides and attritions of nations, as he. As soon put a lump of white marble into your tea, and expect it to melt like sugar, as an Englishman in any part of the earth, or under any circumstances, to part with one fraction of his anglo-ism. And so he goes on repeating and perpetuating in stereotype the blunders and imperfections, as zealously as he does the successes and the excellences of his brothers and his fathers.

And secondly, the English oil painters persist in employing a false and feeble mode of execution. It must be that they carry too far into their method the water-color modes of working—a department in which they excel, and in which they show better color than in oils. They evidently lay on their color everywhere thin and washily, and without enough regard to its opaqueness or transparency. The processes of glazing and going over afterwards with dry

color and a full brush, by which the French produce such richness and vigor of color, and such firm texture, seem to be entirely slighted. Their flesh is all waxy, or else spotty and stippled—pinkish red and chalky white predominating—very different from that

"Beauty truly blent, whose red and white
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on."

Their costume, furniture, curtains, books, &c.—all their still-life in general, are far better than their flesh, though all painted with the same flatness. In landscape their skies are cold, ultramarine, with dirty clouds, without depth, unluminous and unmeaning. Their trees are "riggled," flat, characterless, colorless and unnatural. Their rocks wooden and painty, and without modelling. Their buildings not stony nor solid. In their lights they are feeble, chilly, and cheerless. In their shadows thick and muddy. The meaning of chiaroscuro they have not yet translated. The water is perhaps the best thing they paint, especially the sea, which, in the marine views of Stanfield and J. Wilson, jr., is rendered with a good deal of truth of color and movement. But they carry the same touch into every part of their pictures. This is even the case with the Pre-Raphaelites Hunt and Millais, who ought to know better. In the Ophelia, for example, the bark of the willow is *not barky*, but the thinnest, washiest suggestion of it—which is not in keeping with the elaborate minuteness of the water-flats, and the numberless leaves and flowers hanging over the stream.

The strong point, however, of the English painters, is an unquestionable talent in depicting character and expression, and especially in humorous subjects.

But leaving generalities, I will now mention more particularly some of the works which have struck me in the English department.

In the so-called Pre-Raphaelite pictures of Millais and Hunt, there is a good deal of careful drawing, and an evident earnest striving after exactness of resemblance in minute details—also a certain sentiment and homely truth of expression in the faces and figures. There are six, all of them in these respects (with one exception) striking pictures. And yet as pictures, they are unsatisfactory. Their color is queer and inharmonious. In secondary portions they are too much emphasized. In the "Ophelia Drowning," for instance, the face of Ophelia is certainly remarkably executed (though in the stippled miniature style.) The drawing of the weeds and foliage of the stream, also, is something striking for minuteness, too much so for the subject, and so intensely chrome-green, that the picture seems like a good instrument out of tune. Mr. Ruskin calls Millais a great colorist. I cannot see on what grounds. His coloring is *bizarre*, not too good. The "Order of Release" is a very impressive picture, and better in color. Taken altogether, it is perhaps the best of this sect. The horn buttons and stuffs are quite a marvel of finish, and the modelling of the child's legs beautiful. The "Christ Knocking at the Door," is full of religious and poetic sentiment, but objectionable enough in color. In the "Return of the Dove to the Ark" the best things are the weather-beaten

bird, and the straw, which is imitated with such singularly photographic exactness, that it seems like real straw put into the glass case which covers the picture. "Isabella and Claudio" is a prison scene of truth and nature—with the same defects of color. In all these pictures the execution of the minor details is too prominent, while the painting of the flesh, though labored, is secondary, so far as regards imitation. The "Lost Sheep," of Hunt, is every way disagreeable. There is nothing particularly original in the subject, while all the faults of color of the P. R. B. are here exaggerated. Emerald-colored sea and grass—purple sheep, and purple brown velvet carpeting for earth, are rather too much of a joke to have come from hands that pretend to such truth of detail.

Of Landseer's pictures, several are old friends known through engravings. Landseer deserves all his celebrity in the remarkable expression he gives his dogs. Was it Hood who called him the Dog Star of England? His "Jack in Office," and the "Highland Breakfast," are truly admirable. Nothing could be better in expression. In color too, they are better than most of his I have seen.

His "Night" and "Morning" are painted in a broad and bold style. The first represents two stags on a mountain side, in a misty moonlight, engaged in mortal combat. The other is a fresh sunrise scene, the two combatants lying dead, and a fox stealing up to smell their carcasses. These pictures are large, and show fine imagination. His "Sanctuary" does not come up to the suggestion the engraving gives us. It is feeble and cold. In execution, Landseer has the prevalent English flatness. He is *habile* to the last degree. You are a good deal fascinated with his touch at first. You see that he is such an old hand at it that he can afford to sport with his brush. He touches off his canine friends with a flourish, as a clever writing-master does his manuscript. But he is so sparing of his paint, that his hair often resembles feathers. How different from the vigorous, rough *naïve* execution of some of the French and Belgians, and yet these are men we never hear of in England and America.

Leslie exhibits his "Catherine and Petruccio," his "Uncle Toby and Widow Wadman," his "Sancho Panza and Duchess," and a "Scene from the Vicar of Wakefield." They are all excellent, and well known through engravings. It is a pity that so poor a picture as his "Queen Victoria receiving the Sacrament on the day of her Coronation," should have been exhibited.

Eastlake is pleasing and delicate, but not strong. Webster's Foot-Ball Players, and Village Choir, are full of broad humor. And his Cherry-Seller is very sweet in tone, and highly finished.

Mulready's "Wolf and Lamb," so well known through the engravings, and so deservedly known, is altogether admirable. His "Whistorean Controversy" is wrought with all his finish and truth, and with excellent color, excepting the pink flesh.

Egg, Goodall, Horsley, Uwins, and Ward, have pictures of great cleverness. Roberts has one or two effective architectural views. Lance has a fine fruit piece, and Miss Mutrie two beautiful flower pieces; all good in color.

MacIse has, I understand, a great reputation in England. How he acquired it I am at a loss to imagine. I defy any one to paint worse pictures than the two he exhibits. In conception they are vulgar and theatrical, in drawing only mediocre, in color positively frightful. I almost shudder as I pass that huge monstrosity, the Christmas Revel. I speak plainly, but without exaggeration. I can see in his pictures no one quality that is good. That his pictures are popular, and that he has a reputation among artists and connoisseurs in England, only proves how the English standard of Art needs raising.

In landscape they have nothing to show. There are none of the exhibitors, Linnell, Creswick, Danby, Harding, Lee, Stanfield, Pyne, who compare with men whose names we seldom hear, among French, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, and Swiss. Linnell has a certain vigor, but is muddy and unnatural in his tones. Stanfield's sea views and Alps are well drawn and composed, but cold and hard. Danby, in his Calypso, shows imagination. Holland's views of Rotterdam and the Thames, though sketchy, show a higher idea of color than anything I have seen in this department. I think that, on the whole, I never have seen in so large a gallery so melancholy a set of landscapes; though I heard an enthusiastic Englishman, the other day, exclaim, while contemplating some purple Highland background, "Oh, we beat all the *world* in landscape!"

In the water-color department you see better color. Accustomed to express themselves in a smaller compass, and with a liquid vehicle, the English often here hit upon a purity of tone and color, which they fail to obtain in oils. Cattermole has a number of—you can hardly call them—sketches, and yet they are not finished pictures. At any rate, they are things which show him to be a thorough master, vigorous in conception and execution. Mr. Hunt, in his boy attacking a pie, and its pendant, the same youngster reposing after his victory, and his two boys on a frosty morning, is inimitable for character and the finest humor. For the best color, I should select Cattermole, Thorburne in his miniature, Topham and Wehnert. Fielding and Cox disappointed me.

In conclusion, I cannot but express the hope, that this World's Exhibition of Art may give a decided movement to oil painting in England. Let us hope that the artistic deficiencies of a nation so great in other respects, will in course of time be remedied. A nation so distinguished for its literature, must sooner or later show a corresponding development in Art. The sons of Albion must be indeed a part and parcel of their own broad, immovable Dover cliffs, if they can resist these tides of artistic life and progress that swell and heave around them.

I am, very truly, yours,
C. F. Crouch.

THE FIRST bust for which M. Béranger has ever consented to sit is just completed; and is said by our French neighbors to be a happy likeness of the veteran *chansonnier*. It has a further interest as being the work of a very young lady, Mlle. Derasme—daughter of an artist connected with *Théâtre Français—Athenæum*.